

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 2974

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, BL

SUBJ: PROBABLE JACK ANDERSON STORY ON BOLIVIA

REF: STATE 096621

1. THE "DOCUMENT" REFERRED TO BY WHITTEN IS EVIDENTLY A CLANDESTINE CIRCULAR PURPORTING TO REVEAL A GOB PLAN TO DESTROY THE CHURCH IN BOLIVIA. AN INFORMAL TRANSLATION WILL BE POUCHED.

2. THE CIRCULAR OPENS AS FOLLOWS: "THIS REPORT IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. IT IS BASED ON SECRET REPORTS OF A HIGH OFFICIAL OF THE SECOND SECTION OF THE ARMY. THE REPORT REPRESENTS A PURGE OF CONSCIENCE. COMPARING THIS DATA WITH DATA FROM OTHER PERSONS AND WITH SOME MEASURES TAKEN BY THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR WE ARE CERTAIN THAT THE PLAN IS COMPLETELY ACCURATE."

3. THE CIRCULAR GOES ON TO INDICATE THAT THE GOB PLANS TO DESTROY THE CHURCH BY ATTACKING ITS "VANGUARD"- THE PROGRESSIVE CLERGY, ESPECIALLY THE FOREIGN CLERGY, AND ARCHBISHOP MANRIQUE. NAMES ARE MENTIONED. VARGAS, ARCE AND LAMAZZA PROVIDE BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CERTAIN CLERGY "IN LESS THAN 48 HOURS". A RECENT SUBSTITUTION OF MAJOR VACAFLOR FOR COL. ARABE AS "CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE" CONFIDENTIAL

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IS ASCRIBED TO ARABE'S UNWILLINGNESS TO OPEN A FRONTAL

ATTACK ON THE CHURCH. THE HEART OF THE PLAN EVIDENTLY IS SIMPLY TO SECRETLY ARREST AND EXPEL FOREIGN CLERGYMEN. OTHER ASPECTS INCLUDE PUBLISHING ANTI-"VANGUARD" MATERIALS IN EL DIARIO AND INTIMIDATING PRESENCIA SO THAT IT WILL PUBLISH BIASED NEWS. CERTAIN DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS SUCH AS "ARRESTS SHOULD BE MADE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, IN QUIET STREETS OR LATE AT NIGHT" OR "PROMISE TO REWARD THE BEST AGENTS (INVOLVED IN THIS PLAN). WITH ITEMS CONFISCATED FROM THE HOUSES OF CERTAIN RELIGIOUS", ADD TOUCHES OF MENANCE TO THE DISCOVERED PLOT.

4. COMMENT: THE GOB DOES HAVE POOR RELATIONS WITH CLERGYMEN WHO CRITICIZE GOB POLICIES ESPECIALLY IF THE CRITICS ARE FOREIGNERS. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE GOB HAS A PLAN TO DESTROY THE CHURCH. THE SUBSTITUTION OF VACAFLOR FOR ARABE MOST LIKELY IS EXPLAINED BY THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR'S DESIRE TO UPGRADE EFFICIENCY AND HONESTY IN THE OFFICE. IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THIS "STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL" REPORT WHICH HAS RECEIVED GREAT DISTRIBUTION IS A FABRICATION AND A HEAVYHANDED ONE AT THAT.
STEDMAN

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